**Practice implications of the COVID-19 pandemic: Mental health professionals report from four countries**

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly changed the lives of a majority of the world’s population. People have been encouraged to implement social distancing behaviors enforced by governments, and have experienced loss of employment or changes to the usual working environment. In the mental health sector, psychologists and psychiatrists have been forced to alter the standard care of patients without compromising safety. This article documents the experiences of the authors - mental health professionals in four countries, Canada, Russia, Australia and Japan - at the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, and reviews lessons learned with recommendations for future research, clinical, and training practices. Clinicians adapted their usual best practices by learning new skills and updating their knowledge base. Mental health clinicians noticed that the pandemic led to symptomatic changes in their patients. Most clinicians moved towards providing telemental health services, such as conducting assessments and treatments remotely. Those who continued seeing patients in person employed personal protective equipment with various impacts on the clinician-patient relationship. The advantages and disadvantages of mass quarantines need to be carefully examined, as their effect on numerous health and psychosocial variables appear to be far-reaching.